Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1-6. (Canceled)
- 7. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a polynucleotide having at least 95% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% identity to SEQ ID NO:2, wherein introduction of the nucleic acid into a plant to suppress gene expression results in earlier flowering in the plant compared to a plant not transformed with the nucleic acid.
 - 8-13. (Canceled)
- 14. (Currently amended) A method of decreasing flowering time in a plant, the method comprising introducing into the plant an expression cassette comprising a plant promoter operably linked to a polynucleotide <u>having at least 95% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1</u>, wherein the introduced nucleic acid sequence is transcribed, resulting in an earlier flowering time when compared to a plant not transcribing the nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% identity to SEQ ID NO:2.
 - 15. (Canceled)
- 16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the <u>polynucleotide</u> comprises SEQ ID NO:1 polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2.
 - 17-19. (Canceled)
- 20. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the expression cassette is introduced into the plant through a sexual cross.

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- 21. (Canceled)
- 22. (Currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 7, wherein the polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO:1 polypeptide comprises the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2.
- 23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the plant is a rice plant.
- 24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the <u>polynucleotide</u> comprises SEQ ID NO:1 polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:2.
- 25. (Previously added) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 7, wherein the polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO:1.
 - 26. (Canceled)
- 27. (Currently amended) An expression cassette comprising a promoter operably linked to a heterologous polynucleotide comprising a nucleic acid <u>sequence</u> having at least 95% <u>sequence</u> identity to <u>at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1</u>, wherein introduction of the expression cassette into a plant to suppress gene expression results in earlier flowering in the plant compared to a plant not transformed with the nucleic acid.
- 28. (Currently amended) The expression cassette of claim 27, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.
- 29. (Previously added) A transgenic plant comprising the expression cassette of claim 27.
- 30. (Currently amended) The transgenic plant of claim <u>29</u> 27, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.
 - 31-32. (Canceled)